

Arborist Report Specifications – Tree Risk Assessment

This document should be considered with the [General Arborist Report Specifications](#) for additional information required from an ISA-certified arborist to comply with the [Tree Protection Bylaw](#).

Purpose

A **Tree Risk Assessment** may be required by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services in support of a request for a tree permit, prior to land dedication changing tree ownership or to assist in the resolution of a Tree Protection Bylaw infraction.

Assessments, recommendations and methods must be consistent with International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Saanich Parks will only accept Tree Risk Assessments from qualified arborists.

Tree Risk Assessments must be conducted by an ISA Certified, TRAQ qualified arborist

Tree Risk Assessment

A Tree Risk Assessment provides a methodical assessment to determine the condition and risk rating for a given tree. They may be required after a tree damaging incident, to identify if a tree is able to be retained, or to justify its removal. Tree Risk Assessments are conducted at different levels, depending on specific circumstances. When Saanich Parks requests a risk assessment, the required assessment level will be specified in the request.

- **Level 1: Limited Visual Assessment:** Arborists conduct an assessment by walking or driving by the tree and recording limited amounts of information to determine its overall condition and risk.
- **Level 2: Basic Assessment:** A more detailed visual assessment of a given tree, supplemented with the use of simple tools such as a mallet or probe to evaluate any potential defects, such as cavities.

- **Level 3: Advanced Assessment:** A detailed assessment of the tree which may include the crown, stem and/or roots of a tree and provides information beyond a Level 2 assessment. Provides detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets or site conditions. Involves advanced diagnostic techniques which may include but are not limited to: using an air spade to assist in a root flare inspection, resistance drilling and sonic tomography to detect internal decay, laboratory analysis of soil composition or disease, performing a “pull test” to assess tree stability, or climbing a tree to visually inspect specific aspects of the tree. These advanced assessment techniques are used to detect defects which are not readily apparent from a ground based visual inspection. The additional information from a Level 3 Assessment may be used to determine if any risks can be mitigated or to justify why the tree may require removal.

Description of trees in the Arborist Report are to include:

- A tree inventory (see [General Arborist Report Specifications](#)) with additional details specific to tree risk assessments identified below:
 - Tree Risk Rating
 - Detailed Condition (crown/trunk/roots) to include (or state explicitly if no pathogens were observed):
 - Structural integrity (cracks/included bark/structural weakness)
 - Deadwood (%)
 - Decay (%)
 - Insect infestations (what type)
 - Pathological concerns (what type)
 - Fungal fruiting bodies evident
 - Decay evident at unions, base or elsewhere (micro resistance drilling or sonic tomography)
 - Other specific defects (cracks, cavities, poor limb attachment etc.)
 - Significant lean
 - Live crown ratio
- The Tree Risk Assessment must detail how the risk rating was determined (TRAQ)
- In the case of a Level 3 Assessment, supporting evidence of TRAQ conclusion from observations or diagnostic techniques is required. (such as resistograph records or laboratory results).

- Photographs
 - Must be labelled by tree id # and include a description
 - Include image of the entire Tree
 - Include a close-up of problem areas
 - Include an image that gives the tree in context of the site
- Any other relevant details or other pertinent information

Risk Mitigation Measures

Saanich's expectation is that property owners retain impacted trees where appropriate. The Arborist is to provide remedial actions to mitigate risk where possible or provide rationale as to why retention is not possible.

Recommendations for tree retention must provide detailed descriptions of realistic mitigation measures. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Pruning
- Soil improvements – Aeration, fertilization, fill removal, watering and soil amendments
- Tree support systems
- Recommended further diagnostics – such as soil assessments and laboratory disease identification.
- Recommended follow up assessments and interval to evaluate changes in condition.

Residual Risk Rating

All reports must include an anticipated residual risk rating for the tree following the completion of mitigation. Where multiple mitigation options are proposed, residual risk ratings are to be provided for each relevant option.

If you have any questions about any of the information presented in these tips, please contact Saanich Parks: 250-475-5522 or Parks@saanich.ca